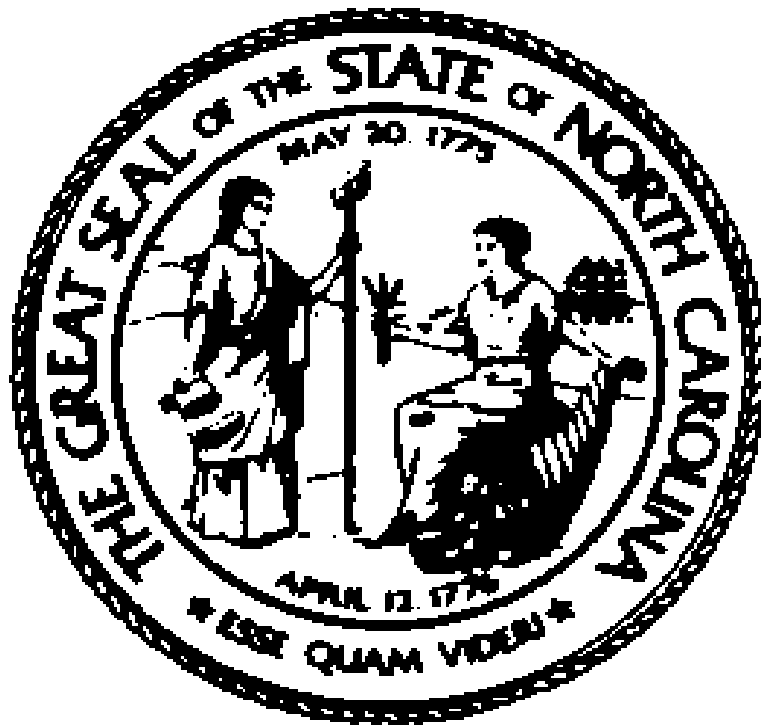


**FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER GRANT PROGRAM  
FEDERALLY FUNDED FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM**

**2000 ANNUAL REPORT**

Pursuant to Session G. S. 143B-152.15



December 21, 2000

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## **Executive Summary**

Family Support Services and Family Resource Centers in North Carolina have continued to demonstrate their ability to help strengthen families. During State Fiscal Year 1999-2000, forty-six counties received funding from Department of Health and Human Services/Division of Social Services (DHHS/DSS) to provide Family Support/Family Resource Center (FS/FRC) programs to county residents. Approximately 8,700 participants were served through these FS/FRC programs. The three primary goals for Family Support Programs in North Carolina are:

- Families will establish safe and supportive environments for their children.
- Programs will support the healthy development of their children.
- Programs will establish and maintain family involvement in program planning.

Data collected through the North Carolina Family Support Outcome Scale (NCFSES) shows that programs are meeting the goals outlined in the legislation that allocated funds for Family Support activities. The results are particularly noteworthy in the following areas:

- Results of the NCFSES indicate that the types of services that are most heavily emphasized by FS/FRC programs show the most positive results.
- Child Development and Academic Success Programs make up almost half of the services provided at FS/FRC programs. Participants in these two service areas exhibit increases in strengths on all items in the Child Functioning Domain.
- FS/FRC programs also emphasized services to increase the skills of parents. These types of services comprised 25% of all service provision.
- In the Parent Functioning Domain of the NCFSES, which would reflect the strengthening of parent functioning, almost 75% of parents exhibited an increase in strengths while involved in FS/FRC programs.
- Two challenges for families highlighted by the NCFSES data are economic self-sufficiency and developing connections to other family-oriented assistance. Local DSS offices offer many resources, and FS/FRCs may need to make a renewed effort to create links with DSS and other agencies to improve access to these resources.

## **Introduction**

This 1999-2000 Annual Report details the activities of the Federally funded Family Support Programs, the State funded Family Resource Center Grant programs, and the Federally funded Community Based Family Resource and Support programs. These programs will be collectively referred to as Family Support/Family Resource Center (FS/FRC) programs. This is the second consecutive year that the end of year evaluations for these programs have been merged into a single report. All of the programs included in this report record their activities through the Family Support Management Information System, an online database. Each Family Support/Family Resource Center program in North Carolina is responsible for tracking all program activities by updating the database on a continuing basis.

During State Fiscal Year (SFY) 1999-2000, forty-six counties received funding from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services (DSS) to provide FS/FRC services to county residents. These FS/FRC services were provided through sixty Family Resource Centers and twelve Family Support programs (Appendix B).

Because FS/FRC programs in North Carolina receive funding from different sources, it was important to establish overarching goals for FS/FRC programs that met the requirements of each funding source. In order to do this effectively, the goals and related outcomes for the programs were derived from the original legislation allocating resources for FS/FRC services. The following tables provide a comparison of the legislative intent of each allocation source, as well as the evaluation requirements for each program:

## Statement of Purpose for the funding of Family Support Programs

<b>Family Resource Center Grants Program (State)</b>	<b>Title IV B, Subpart 2 of the Social Security Act (Federal)</b>	<b>Community Based Family Resource &amp; Support Grants (Federal)</b>
<p>(a) “The purpose of the program is to provide grants to establish family resource centers that provide services to children from birth through elementary school age and to their families that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enhance the children’s development and ability to attain academic and social success;</li> <li>2. Ensure a successful Transition from early childhood education programs and child-care to the public schools.</li> <li>3. Assist families in achieving economic independence and self-sufficiency; and</li> <li>4. Mobilize public and private community resources to help children and families in need”.</li> </ol> <p>(b) “to encourage and support broad-based collaboration among public and private agencies and among people who reflect the racial and socioeconomic diversity in communities...”</p> <p>(c) “this program shall be targeted to those neighborhoods that have disproportionately high levels of (i) children who would be less likely to attain educational or social success, (ii) families with low incomes, and (iii) crime and juvenile delinquency.”</p>	<p>Four goals are identified:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The safety of all family members must be assured.</li> <li>2) These programs should serve to enhance parents’ ability to create safe, stable, and nurturing home environments that promote healthy child development.</li> <li>3) To assist children and families to resolve crises, connect with necessary and appropriate services, and remain safely together in their homes whenever possible.</li> <li>4) To avoid the unnecessary out-of-home placements of children, and help children already in out-of-home care to be returned to, and be maintained with, their families or in another planned, permanent family.</li> </ol> <p>The child and family services plan must develop a planning process that includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Broad involvement and consultation with a wide range of appropriate public, private, and community-based organizations, parents who have experience with the child welfare system, and others;</li> <li>2) Coordination of the provision of services under the plan with other federally assisted programs serving children and families; and</li> <li>3) Collection of information to help determine vulnerable or at-risk populations or target areas.</li> </ol>	<p>Local Program Requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Assess community assets and needs through a planning process that involves parents and local public agencies, local nonprofit organizations, and private sector representatives.</li> <li>2) Develop a strategy to provide, over time, a continuum of preventative, family-centered services to children and families, especially to young parents and parents with young children, through public-private partnerships.</li> <li>3) Provide- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Core family resource and support services;</li> <li>b) Other core services, which must be provided to the extent practicable;</li> <li>c) Access to optional services;</li> </ol> </li> <li>4) Other core services, which must be provided to the extent practicable;</li> <li>5) Develop leadership roles for the meaningful involvement of parents in the development, operation, evaluation, and oversight of the programs and services;</li> <li>6) Provide leadership in mobilizing local public and private resources to support the provision of needed family resource and support program services; and</li> <li>7) Participate with other community-based, prevention-focused, family resource and support programs in the development, operation and expansion of the Statewide network.</li> </ol>

## Evaluation Requirements for Family Support/Family Resource Center Programs

<b>Family Resource Center Grants Program (State)</b>	<b>Title IV B, Subpart 2 of the Social Security Act (Federal)</b>	<b>Community Based Family Resource &amp; Support Grants (Federal)</b>
<p>(a) The Department of Health and Human Services shall develop and implement an evaluation system that will assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Family Resource Center Grant Program. The Department shall design this system to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide information to the Department and to the General Assembly on how to improve and refine the programs;</li> <li>2. Enable the Department and the General Assembly to assess the overall quality, efficiency, and impact of the existing programs;</li> <li>3. Enable the Department and the General Assembly to determine whether to modify the Family Resource Center Grant Program; and</li> <li>4. Provide a detailed fiscal analysis of how State funds for these programs were used.</li> </ol> <p>(b) The Department shall present an annual report on the implementation of the program and the results of the program evaluation.</p> <p>(c) Agencies that receive a grant shall demonstrate the extent to which the local family resource center has met the local needs, goals, and anticipated outcomes as set forth in the grant application.</p>	<p>Each state must prepare and make available to the public, an Annual Progress and Services Report which must include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A report on the specific accomplishments and progress made in the past fiscal year toward meeting each goal and objective, including improved outcomes for children and families, and a more comprehensive, coordinated, effective child and family services continuum;</li> <li>2. Any revision in the statement of goals and objectives, if necessary, to reflect changed circumstances;</li> <li>3. A description of the family support services to be provided in the upcoming fiscal year; and</li> <li>4. Information on activities in the areas of training, technical assistance, research, evaluation, or management information systems that will be carried out in support of the goals and objectives in the plan.</li> </ol>	<p>A. Grantees shall submit annual performance reports, which will contain information of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstration of the effective development, operation and expansion of a Statewide network of community-based, prevention-focused, family resource and support programs;</li> <li>2. An inventory and description of the services provided to families by local programs;</li> <li>3. Demonstration of the expansion of existing services to address unmet needs;</li> <li>4. Description of the number of families served, and the involvement of a diverse representation of families in the design, operation, and evaluation of the family resource and support programs;</li> <li>5. Demonstration of a high-level of satisfaction among families who have used the family resource and support programs;</li> <li>6. Demonstration of the establishment or maintenance of innovative funding mechanisms that blend Federal, State, local, and private funds for the enhancement of community-based, prevention-focused, family resource and support programs.</li> </ol>

## **Goals and Outcomes for Family Support Services**

In order to address the goals of the various FS/FRC funding sources and to develop and maintain an integrated Family Support/Family Resource Center Network, State level program administrators developed a set of unifying goals and related outcomes:

### **GOAL 1: Families will establish safe and supportive environments for their children**

*Related Outcome:* 80% of all ratings on the North Carolina Family Support Outcome Scale will demonstrate an increase in strengths for program participants in at least one of the following areas:

- Overall Child Functioning
- Overall Parent Functioning
- Overall Family Functioning
- Overall Community Functioning
- Overall Individual Functioning

### **GOAL 2: Programs will support the healthy development of their children**

*Related Outcome:* 100% of the Family Support programs will provide an ongoing parent education program using a state or nationally recognized model that focuses on one or more of the following areas:

- Child/Youth Development Needs
- Appropriate discipline skills/strategies
- Parent-child communications
- Parent-child relationships
- Parental behavior as role models for children
- Budgeting/money management
- Stress Management
- Time Management
- Leadership Skills

### **GOAL 3. Programs will establish and maintain family involvement in program planning**

*Related Outcome:* 100% of the Family Support programs will have a governing body that meets two (2) standards:

- A minimum of four to six (4-6) meetings a year.
- A minimum of four (4) consumer/family representatives on the board, of whom two will be in attendance at each meeting.

## **Definition of Family Support Programs and Family Resource Centers**

### ***Family Support:***

Family support is best defined as a conceptual approach to strengthening and empowering families and communities so they can foster the most favorable development of all family members. Rather than following a particular intervention design, family support programs attempt to address the specific needs of the community in which they operate. This flexibility encourages grass-roots program development and collaboration with families and other local interests in the program planning process.

Because of the grassroots, community-based orientation of family support programs, there are significant variances between different programs. Many family support programs are far-reaching and make available an array of social, educational, and recreational activities. Other family support programs are designed to provide a single service such as after-school tutoring. Some examples of intervention components for family support services in North Carolina include adult education, tutoring, employment training, school-based/linked programs, respite care, health screenings, support groups, parent education/training, and family recreation. Appendix A gives a complete listing of activities offered through each family support program in the state.

### ***Family Resource Centers***

The family support service model most commonly used is the Family Resource Center. Family Resource Centers (FRCs) are a centralized source for family services and are located within the communities they serve. These centers provide services to children from birth through elementary school age and to their families. Having a centralized service location allows Family Resource Centers to provide ongoing services, such as



child health and dental check-ups, recreational activities, and a wide variety of social and educational programs. Family Resource Centers also serve as a base of operation for outreach and in-home services. As with other family support models, FRCs operate prevention-focused programs that seek to help families and children develop in healthy ways, prevent dysfunction, and help families develop support networks in their own community.

### **Premises and Principles of Family Support Practice**

In 1996, Family Support America published *Guidelines for Family Support Practice*, which describes the premises of family support and the principles of family support practice. FS/FRC programs in North Carolina have closely followed these guidelines for family support practice, as these guidelines meet legislative intent (as seen on page 5) and establish a firm conceptualization of effective family support services.

#### **Premises of Family Support**

1. Primary responsibility for the development and well-being of children lies within the family, and all segments of society must support families as they rear their children.
2. Assuring the well-being of all families is the cornerstone of a healthy society, and requires universal access to support programs and services.
3. Children and families exist as part of an ecological system.
4. Child-rearing patterns are influenced by parents' understandings of child development and of their children's unique characteristics, personal sense of competence, and cultural and community traditions and mores.
5. Enabling families to build on their own strengths and capacities promotes the healthy development of children.
6. The developmental processes that make up parenthood and family life create needs that are unique at each stage in the life span.
7. Families are empowered when they have access to information and other resources and take action to improve the well-being of children, families, and communities.

(From: Guidelines for Family Support Practice (1996) (Chicago:Family Support America)

## **Principles of Family Support Practice**

1. Staff and families work together in relationships based on equality and respect.
2. Staff enhance families' capacity to support the growth and development of all family members-adults, youth, and children.
3. Families are resources to their own members, to other families, to programs, and to communities.
4. Programs affirm and strengthen families' cultural, racial, and linguistic identities and enhance their ability to function in a multicultural society.
5. Programs are embedded in their communities and contribute to the community-building process.
6. Programs advocate with families for services and systems that are fair, responsive, and accountable to the families served.
7. Practitioners work with families to mobilize formal and informal resources to support family development.
8. Programs are flexible and continually responsive to emerging family and community issues.
9. Principles of family support are modeled in all program activities, including planning, governance, and administration.

(From: Guidelines for Family Support Practice (1996) (Chicago:Family Support America)

### **Core Services of Family Support Programs**

FS/FRC Core services are programs and services which address state and federal legislative mandates. These core services are offered based upon the needs and resources assessment conducted in the target community. Unlike one-time workshops or forums, core services are offered on a regular basis and form the cornerstone of family support programs in North Carolina.

The Division of Social Services, Children's Services Section, Resource Development Team has identified the following ten core services offered by State Funded FS/FRC programs: Academic Success/Tutoring; Adult Literacy/Adult Education; Child and Youth Development; Community Building; Health Services/Health Education; Family Services Coordination; Career Development; Parent Education; Parent/Child

Participation Programs; and Transportation/Child Care Support Services. A description of each core service follows:

**Academic Success Programs/Tutoring**

This service encompasses all programs whose primary purpose is to foster the academic achievement of children and youth. Examples include after-school and summer education programs, lending libraries, and out-of-school suspension programs.

**Adult Literacy/Adult Education**

Included in this service are one-on-one and group literacy classes for adults. The philosophy behind these classes is that adult literacy enhancement will provide important education for parents, modeling for children and will increase resources available for family development.

**Child and Youth Development**

The emphasis of these programs is the social and psychological development of children and youth, in addition to educational enrichment. Examples include guided play programs; mentoring programs; recreation programs and camps; programs aimed at increasing self-esteem; and substance abuse awareness programs.

**Community Building**

These services are intended to help strengthen the communities in which families live. Examples include community policing program, efforts to clean up neighborhoods and repair homes, mediation services, and collaboration with housing and economic development agencies.

**Health Services/Health Education**

These services are designed to promote the physical and mental health and well being of community residents. Examples include immunizations, WIC distribution, health education programs, and basic health screenings.

**Family Services Coordination**

These services respond to specific family issues as identified by the family members themselves. Comprehensive case management, including goal setting, counseling, problem solving, material assistance, and referral to other resources is provided.

**Career Development**

The purpose of these services is to provide adults with the job skills and resources needed to obtain employment and become economically self-sufficient. Services include job readiness programs, job placement counseling, computer skills programs or other skill development programs, and resume writing classes.

**Parent Education/Parent Support Groups**

These services are intended to empower parents to increase their effectiveness in nurturing positive growth in their children. Included in this group of services are formal parent skills training, support groups (i.e. teen parent or single parent support groups), and education regarding effective discipline of children.

**Parent/Child Participation Programs**

These services are designed to enhance relationships between parents and their children, with the goal of enhancing the development of both parent and child. Examples include parent/child literacy programs and local Family Nights.

**Transportation/Child Care Support Services**

These services are offered on an on-going basis to parents and children who are participating in FRC programs, activities and meetings. Transportation is also provided to families in order to support career or educational development and/or to access needed health care.

**Training Initiatives/Program Refinements**

Recently, North Carolina was named as one of the new participants in the Family Support America/STATES Initiative (State Technical Assistance and Training for Effective Systems). As part of this initiative, the Resource Development Team will take the responsibility of supporting and training individuals, groups, and agencies in the use of family support principles and practices to strengthen communities and families. To meet this responsibility, a new Training Consultant was hired in August, 2000 to develop a competency-based training program that will be integrated with other Children's Services training. For the current year (FY 2001), Bringing It All Back Home (BIABH) will provide regional training programs that will serve as program specific supplements to the Family Based Services curriculum. In an effort to better supply technical assistance to individual FS/FRC programs, the Resource Development Team has developed a regional system of consultation, allowing for more frequent communication between DSS program consultants and individual service providers.

## **Measuring Outcomes of Family Support/Family Resource Centers**

There has been an increasing emphasis on developing outcome measures that enable agencies to answer the question of whether the services being offered are both successful in accomplishing their goals and cost-effective. Family Support programs have been able to provide persuasive arguments about why their services are needed, but until recently have had a difficult time providing objective, quantitative evidence regarding the efficacy of their programs. In order to address the lack of adequate outcome measures for family support programs, the Division of Social Services and the Division of Child Development worked with consultants to develop the North Carolina Family Support Outcomes Scale (NCFSOS).

As mentioned previously, there is a wide array of Family Support programs across the state and, therefore, a wide array of different outcomes that these programs are interested in measuring. In developing the NCFSOS, we tried to address as many of the programs' stated outcome goals as possible. All of these outcomes are tied to the goals and outcomes stated in the legislation allocating funds for FS/FRC programs. Family Support literature helped us in summarizing the individual items on the NCFSOS into five domains:

- **Overall Child Functioning**
- **Overall Parent Functioning**
- **Overall Individual Functioning**
- **Overall Family Functioning**
- **Overall Community Functioning**

The NCFSES is included in North Carolina's statewide Family Support Management Information System (MIS); an information system designed to track program data from all FS/FRC programs across the state. Since the NCFSES was designed as the program outcomes part of the MIS, it is a global measure. Each item addresses a very complex issue in a single global phrase. For instance, the item titled *"Parenting skills, knowledge, and attitudes"* (item B-I) addresses a range of possible outcome goals stated by parent education programs across the state: increasing positive child discipline techniques, increasing parents' knowledge of appropriate developmental behavior, improving parents' attitudes towards child-rearing and their children, and so on. All of these outcome goals, each of which can be broken down into several factors or issues, have been integrated into the global phrase "Parenting skills, knowledge, and attitudes." While this measure lacks some precision, it does provide funding agencies and individual programs with useful knowledge of the progress being made toward the achievement of broad program goals. A copy of the NCFSES and the user's guide are included in Appendix C and D, respectively.

## **North Carolina's Family Support Database**

The Division of Social Services, in conjunction with The Human Services Smart Agency of the University of North Carolina School of Social Work, Chapel Hill, developed an Internet based data management system for the purpose of monitoring individual and statewide family support program performance. This data management system allows the Division to track the information required by the agencies funding the FS/FRC programs. The Family Support Database records the type of services offered, the demographic information of individuals and families receiving services, and the outcomes of services as measured by the North Carolina Family Support Outcome Scale. Also included on the Family Support Database web page is an area that allows the Division to update programs on important administration issues related to FS/FRC programs. The Family Support data management system allows programs to retrieve statistics for individual program components and for overall program summary reports. These statistics can be used to aid programs in obtaining additional funding and in future program planning. In the fall of 2000, the responsibility of maintenance and further development of the database was transferred to Appalachian State University (ASU). The Division will continue to work with programs and ASU to refine the Family Support Database, in order to optimize the ability to monitor and improve program performance.

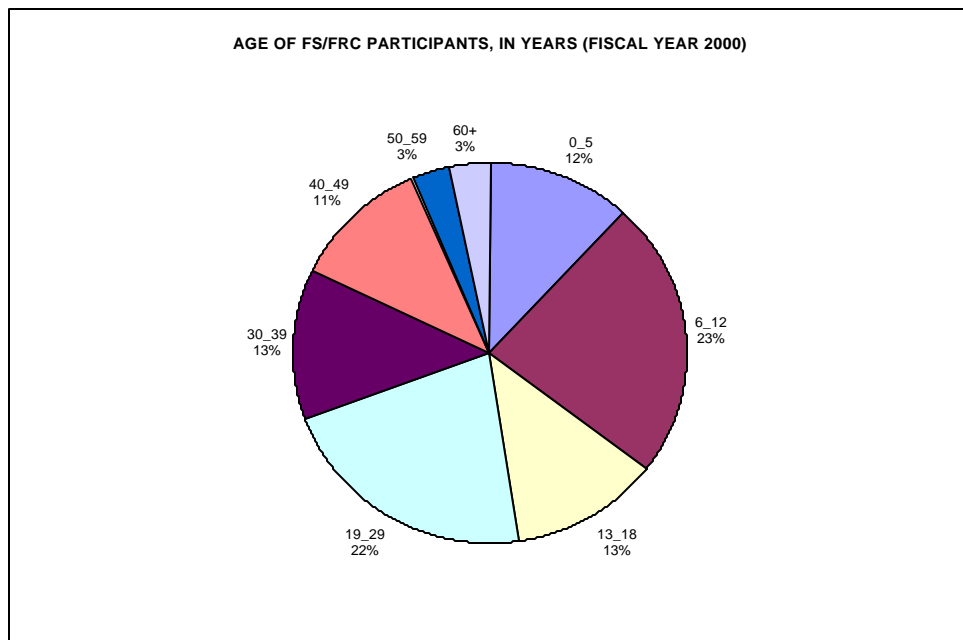
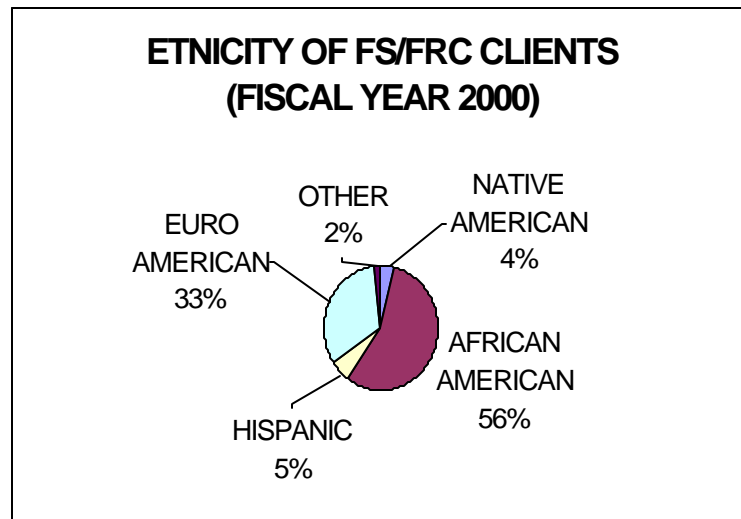
## **Presentation of Findings**

As stated above, data for all FS/FRC activities are recorded in the Family Support Database through the Internet. On March 1<sup>st</sup> of 2000, all data that had been previously entered into the database was lost. An explanation of this data loss can be found in Appendix E. In order to recover the lost data, the Resource Development Team worked with the FS/FRC programs to re-enter as much data as possible. The end result was that much of the lost data was recovered. There was, however, a small, but significant, amount of unrecoverable data from the first 3 quarters of the year, as some programs used the database as their sole record-keeping source. All program activities that occurred after April 1, 2000 are fully represented in the database. In order to adequately account for lost data, all findings regarding the effectiveness of FS/FRC programs will be presented on a statewide level. The impact of the lost data is small when viewing all programs as a whole, but could be quite significant on the individual program level.

The demographic information available outlines the characteristics of the families who participated in FS/FRC activities. Programs served family members of all ages, with slightly less than half (49%) of all family members served 18 years of age or younger. Eighteen percent of the individual family members served were 40 years or older. This wide variance in age of participants indicates that FS/FRC centers are working on the principle that the entire family needs to be involved in the change process, rather than just the child. Approximately two-thirds of the family members served were women, which appears to suggest that females are still taking on much of the child-rearing responsibilities for families. Ethnicity information reveals an over-representation of African American families (55%, compared to 22% in the general population of NC)



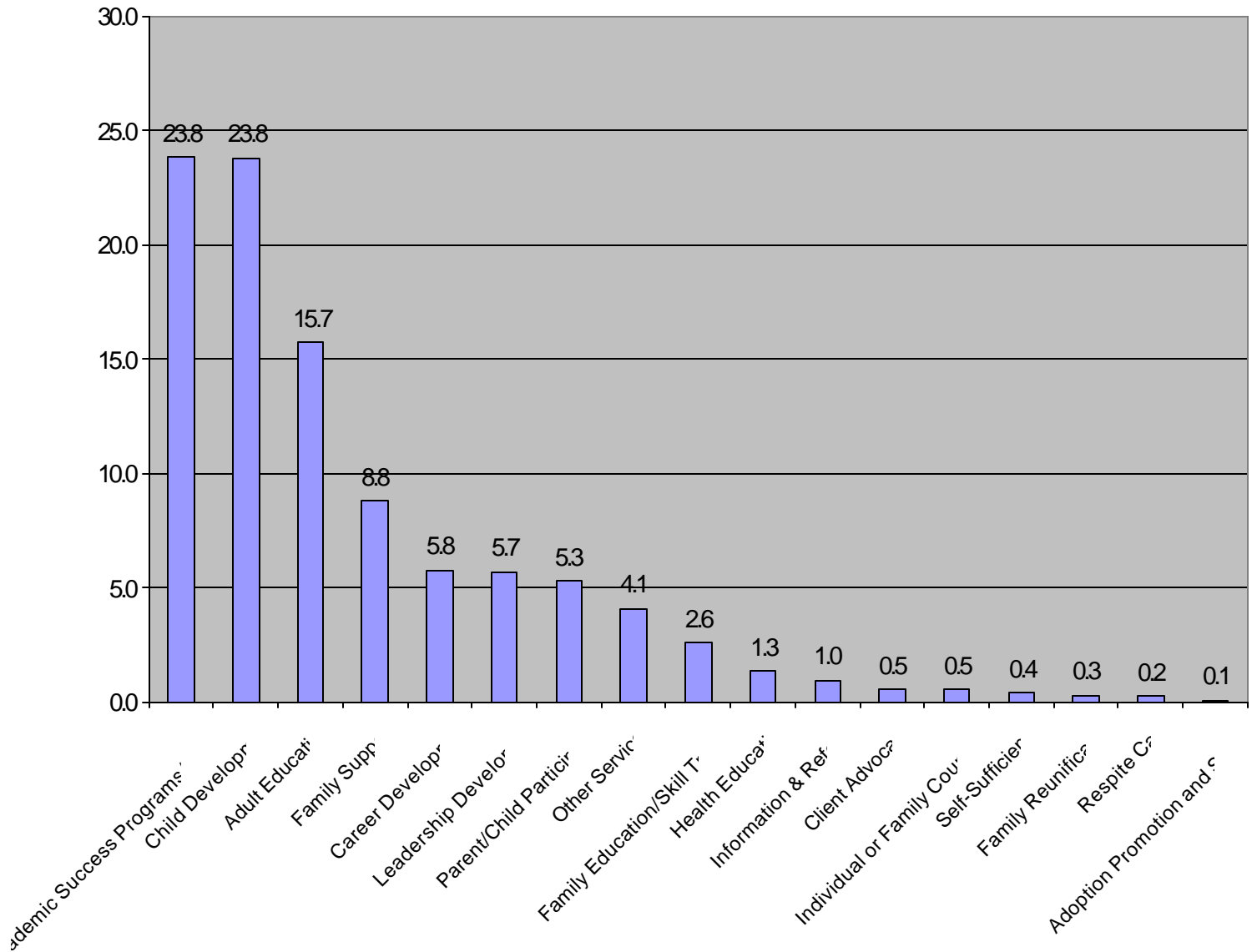
among participants in FS/FRC programs. This is appropriate, as African Americans have been shown to be at greater risk of school failure, poverty, and juvenile delinquency, and agencies funding FS/FRC programs have specifically stated the need to help vulnerable or at-risk populations. The following graphs provide demographic information in greater detail.



In order to meet the most vulnerable populations, FS/FRC programs often must help families meet basic needs. It is only after these basic needs are met that families are then able to address other core issues related to the development of their children and themselves. Examples of basic needs are transportation and meals. Existing records indicate that FS/FRC programs provided more concrete assistance in FY 2000 compared to FY1999. In 2000, FS/FRC programs provided transportation to 13,893 program participants, compared to 10,994 participants in 1999 (an increase of 25 percent). It is worth noting that this increase may, in fact, have been greater if we had a complete data record of FS/FRC services. In addition, Family Resource Centers provided 38,732 meals to program participants in 2000. Child-Care is another basic need that has to be addressed by families in order to take advantage of other services offered by Family Support/Family Resource Centers. FS/FRC programs provided thousands of days of child-care in order to assist families in accessing needed services.

Analyzing the type of programs offered at Family Support/Family Resource Centers across the state, it is evident that the primary emphasis is on the social and cognitive development of children and youth. Almost one-half of the services offered (47.6%) were either academic success/tutoring programs or services focused on child development. Service components directed toward increasing the ability of parents to provide a better home environment for their families (Family Support, Career Development, and Self-sufficiency), made up one-fourth (24.9%) of the services offered. The remaining one-fourth of the services offered covered a wide range of other family activities. A complete presentation of service types is shown on the following page.

# FS/FRC SERVICE TYPES PROVIDED (% OF TOTAL, FISCAL YEAR 2000)



## North Carolina Family Support Outcome Scale Results

The results of the North Carolina Family Support Outcome Scale show that the FS/FRC programs continue to make a significant difference in the lives of the families they serve. There were 41,161 scale items completed both prior to receipt of services and after services were completed (one client may be rated on multiple indicators), and almost two-thirds of these indicators showed that positive growth occurred during the service period. While each of the five domains being measured showed significant growth, looking at the ratings within individual domains provides useful information regarding the strengths and weakness of the FS/FRC programs across the state.

The first domain is Overall Child Functioning. There were 10,261 pre- and post-ratings in this domain, or 80 percent of the number of ratings in 1999. When compared to the 1999 data, the 2000 data shows an increase in positive ratings (1 or more points of growth on a 10 point scale) and a decrease in the most unfavorable ratings (a loss of strength). The greatest gain was in the scale item “Child’s Developmental Status”, where there was a 5.8 percent increase in the number of ratings that showed a 2-point or greater increase in growth.

	Decrease		No Change		1 pt. Increase		2 pt. Increase		3+ pt. Increase	
<b>Overall Child Functioning</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>1999</b>
Child's developmental status	1.36	1.60	29.35	32.60	30.63	32.70	19.61	17.40	19.04	15.40
Child's physical health	1.44	3.10	39.25	41.50	30.4	27.80	16.12	14.20	12.79	13.10
Child's mental health	1.42	2.40	36.6	37.70	31.78	30.40	18.46	16.00	11.75	13.30
Child's behavior	1.58	2.40	31.59	31.10	28.66	30.90	20.22	18.90	17.95	16.50
Child's school performance	1.63	2.20	28.98	25.30	28.98	33.50	22.47	19.10	19.95	19.60
Movement toward self-sufficiency	1.01	1.80	24.7	24.00	36.64	31.70	21.46	20.50	16.19	21.70

The next domain, Overall Parent Functioning, also showed a significant increase in the proportion of ratings of positive growth. The Family Support Database contained three-fourths as many ratings this year as it did in 1999 (5,865 in 2000 versus 8,039 in 1999). On four of the six items in this domain, there was a 10 point or greater shift from a rating of ‘No Change’ to a rating of positive growth. The item showing the largest shift toward more positive ratings was “Parent’s Educational Attainment”.

	Decrease		No Change		1 pt. Increase		2 pt. Increase		3+ pt. Increase	
	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999
<b>Overall Parent Functioning</b>										
Parenting skills/knowledge/attitudes	1.15	1.60	22.53	33.30	35.03	30.20	20.31	18.90	20.97	15.80
Parent's sense of support	1.47	1.60	23.11	35.80	33.33	26.90	19.8	18.00	22.28	17.50
Parent's physical/mental health	2	2.50	30.78	39.14	33.3	28.36	16.91	13.98	17.02	15.94
Parent's educational attainment	2.37	2.40	31.68	44.60	32.54	23.40	14.76	13.60	18.64	15.80
Parent's leadership skills	1.52	2.00	29.55	37.10	32.9	26.80	18.07	17.00	17.97	17.00
Participation in community activities	1.05	2.00	25.16	30.10	35.05	29.40	16.86	17.10	21.87	21.20

The Overall Family Functioning Domain items present greater variance in outcomes than the items in previous domains. Again, we were able to retrieve approximately three-quarters of the number ratings as we did the previous year (7,456 in 2000 compared to 10,329 in 1999). There was a large increase (11.27%) in the number of ratings indicating a 3 point or greater positive increase in “Parent-Child Interactions”. The other items related to family dynamics showed a shift from large positive increase to moderate (1 point) increase in strength. The ratings for the two items related to the economic well being of families (“Family economic self-sufficiency” and “Ability to meet basic economic needs”) indicated that there was a shift from a large increase in strength to a more moderate increase or no change in strength.

	Decrease		No Change		1 pt. Increase		2 pt. Increase		3+ pt. Increase	
	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999
<b>Overall Family Functioning</b>										
Parent-Child Interactions	1.64	1.20	28.66	34.30	24.96	30.00	15.58	16.40	29.17	17.90
Family communication	1.4	1.90	37.27	35.30	30.08	28.90	18.69	16.30	12.57	17.30
Family cohesiveness, support	1.43	1.90	38.26	35.90	29.8	26.10	18.59	17.40	11.92	18.60
Physical & emotional environments	1.69	1.30	35.95	33.10	32.57	27.50	16.89	18.70	12.91	19.10

Informal social support	1.71	1.80	39.02	38.10	29.02	23.80	16.59	17.60	13.66	18.50
Family economic self-sufficiency	1.71	1.90	42.48	38.00	23.71	24.90	21.14	15.80	10.95	19.30
Ability to meet economic needs	1.92	1.80	43.24	40.10	23.39	22.10	19.94	16.50	11.51	19.40
Ability to solve family disputes	1.92	2.90	39.51	35.20	30.18	23.20	17.14	17.40	11.25	21.00

The last domain, Overall Individual Functioning, is the only domain that received more ratings (115%) in 2000 than in 1999 (12,757 in 2000 versus 11,115 in 1999). This indicates that FS/FRC personnel are using this domain more often to rate the progress of clients. As with the combined ratings for all of the domains of the NCFSSOS, approximate two-thirds of the FS/FRC program participants receiving a rating in the Individual Functioning Domain demonstrated an increase in strengths during the course of the program. There was a decrease in negative ratings in this domain, as evidenced by the proportion of ratings showing a loss of strengths during the treatment period.

	Decrease		No Change		1 pt. Increase		2 pt. Increase		3+ pt. Increase	
<b>Overall Individual Functioning</b>	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999
Skills, knowledge, & attitudes	0.8	1.40	38.05	29.40	25.11	28.90	21.68	18.80	14.35	21.30
Sense of support in parenting role	0.85	1.40	25.17	25.30	26.07	24.10	28.49	21.20	19.42	27.70
Individual's physical/mental health	1.35	2.00	39.14	36.10	22.99	26.80	21.68	16.00	14.83	18.80
Individual's educational attainment	1.54	1.80	38.4	33.90	20.7	23.60	24.11	18.90	15.24	21.60
Individual's leadership skills	1.07	1.40	33.97	27.40	23.38	26.60	28.94	18.90	12.64	25.50
Participation in comm. activities	0.98	1.60	30.08	27.20	24.68	24.40	28.3	18.30	15.96	28.40

## **Conclusion**

The results of the North Carolina Family Support Outcome Scale show that the individuals and families who participate in FS/FRC programs strengthen their functioning during the period of time they are involved in FS/FRC programming. Additionally, the types of services that are most heavily emphasized by FS/FRC programs show the most positive results. Child Development and Academic Success Programs make up almost half of the services provided at FS/FRC programs. It is in these services that there are significant increases in strengths on all items in the Overall Child Functioning Domain.

Another area of emphasis for FS/FRC programs was to help increase the skills of parents through Adult Education and Family Support. These two service components made up an additional 25 percent of all services offered. On the Overall Parent Functioning Domain, which would reflect the strengthening of parent functioning, almost 75% of parents exhibited an increase in strengths while involved in FS/FRC programs. These results are particularly impressive because FS/FRC centers work within a particular community, meaning that there is a likelihood of many repeating participants from year to year. Continuing to help families increase strengths after the initial 'boost' from services is often quite challenging, but it appears that FS/FRC programs have been able to help families stay on an upward growth trajectory.

There are concerns raised by the results of the NCFSSOS. There is a decrease this past year in the proportion of families displaying an ability to meet their basic economic needs. This may suggest a need for additional resources aimed at meeting the concrete needs of families. This may also suggest a need for continued efforts at collaboration among community agencies, particularly with those programs in the community that are focused on helping families with food, rent, and utility assistance. The ratings of community functioning suggest the need for renewed focus on collaboration, centered on creating a well-integrated, cooperative child welfare system that includes DSS, non-profits, churches and other. The community functioning data may also reflect the stabilization of resource awareness in local areas, as there have been many campaigns aimed at increasing family awareness of resources in the past few years. Further study is needed to make definitive conclusions regarding the cause of the lowered ratings for community functioning.

In final summary, Family Support and Family Resource Center programs appear to meet the goals mandated in the legislation that provided funding for these programs. Family Support Programs and Family Resource Centers in North Carolina are, as a whole, adhering to the Principles and Premises of Family Support Practice that make this innovative service type an effective way to reach out to needy families in the state. Data indicate that program participants are developing needed skills and strengths, and that those families show positive growth during the time they are involved with FS/FRC services.